

ON TRACK WITH MDT

April 2002

Recent evidence to the contrary, spring is here, and that means that the start of the road construction season.

April 8 through 12 has been designated as National Work Zone Awareness Week, a time when the nation focuses on the start of the construction season and the risks of speeding in work zones, especially with the increased traffic that the summer and fall seasons bring.

In calendar year 2000, 1,093 people were killed in work zone accidents throughout the United States, three of them in Montana. Further, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) reports that over 40,000 people are injured each year because of work zone crashes, 5,000 of them in large truck crashes in 2000.

This year, in an effort to encourage increased driver awareness, MCA and MDT are placing bumper stickers saying, "I slow down in construction work zones" on all our fleet vehicles. I hope that these bumper stickers will serve as a reminder that we all need to "Drive slow. Think fast" when approaching a construction work zone – and that we expect our employees to pioneer this effort.

Nationally, the American Traffic Safety Services Association (ATSSA) is unveiling a traveling National Work Zone Memorial dedicated to honoring the thousands of men, women and children who have died in work zone crashes. The wall, entitled *Respect and Remembrance: Reflections of Life on the Road*, contains panels honoring the names of work zone fatalities in each state, along with panels honoring the sponsors who have made the wall possible. The memorial wall will be unveiled at an April 9 dedication ceremony in Capitol Heights, Md.

This first year, Montana was unable to submit any names for the wall because state law prohibits the release of accident victims' names. ATSSA, recognizing that some states could not provide the names of those killed in work zones this first year, has stated that they will be updating the memorial annually. I encourage anyone who has lost a loved one in this manner and who would like that loved one's name added to the memorial to contact MDT.

I also encourage you to share the following safety tips with your employees and family. Together, we can make Montana's work zones a safer place to work in and travel through.

1. STAY ALERT. Dedicate your full attention to the roadway.
2. PAY CLOSE ATTENTION. Signs and work zone flaggers save lives.
3. TURN ON YOUR HEADLIGHTS. Workers and other motorists must see you.
4. DON'T TAILGATE.
5. DON'T SPEED. Note the posted speed limits in and around the work zone.
6. KEEP UP WITH THE TRAFFIC FLOW.
7. DON'T CHANGE LANES IN THE WORK ZONE.
8. MINIMIZE DISTRACTIONS. Avoid changing radio stations and using mobile phones while driving in a work zone.
9. EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED. Keep an eye out for workers and their equipment.
10. BE PATIENT. Remember that work zone crew members are working to improve your future ride.

Thanks for staying “on track” with MDT!

Dave Galt
Director